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Information Assurance Vital in 21st Century

SENIOR AIRMAN A.J. BOSKER

WASHINGTON -- Information Assurance [IA] is crucial if the Defense Department hopes to confront the potential for cyber aggression and meet the challenges of the 21st century, Maj. Gen. Thomas B. Goslin Jr., Director of Operations, U.S. Space Command [USSPACECOM], told the Senate Emerging Threats and Capabilities Committee March 1. To do so means placing special emphasis on the importance of defending our information systems, he said.

According to the general, a broad range of threats exists to DoD information infrastructure and its ability to maintain information superiority. Furthermore, USSPACECOM has become increasingly aware of certain vulnerabilities inherent in current defense information infrastructure.

"Our concern is heightened because any adversary will look for ways to exploit our vulnerabilities and most likely apply strategies to attack our defense networks and reduce the United States' ability to maintain information superiority," he said. "We believe that cyber aggression, as part of an adversary's overall strategy, may occur well in advance of any direct hostilities and last throughout any conflict."

Goslin said the formal move to place the responsibility for Computer Network Defense [CND] under a single command, USSPACECOM, highlights the recognition that DoD must rapidly improve joint operations in order to protect and defend critical defense information infrastructure.

"Protect and defend," he said, includes a range of activities from establishing DoD policy, collecting capabilities and procedures, and conducting defensive operations to develop and employ methods and capabilities against cyber aggression.

And that is exactly what USSPACECOM has been doing for the last five months since assuming global responsibility for CND, Goslin said.

"We have focused a tremendous amount of effort to normalize and operationalize CND across DoD and enhance information assurance," he said. "Computer Network Defense is a key element of IA and must be carried out at all levels within our information systems.

"We know a risk accepted by any one part of our network is a risk imposed on all parts of our network," Goslin said. "We believe our defense information networks must be developed, operated, and sustained just like any other weapons system.

"Information assurance is the responsibility of everyone who operates or uses a DoD network. "

Editor's Note: This information is in the public domain at **http://www.af.mil/news**.

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